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Overview

The Kosovo Education System was established in the period 1945-1968 by gradually devolving responsibilities from the government in Belgrade to the provincial authorities in Prishtina. The 1974 constitutional reform made Kosovo function as a self-governing unit within former Yugoslavia with its own structures wielding autonomous legislative, executive, and judicial powers, with Education as one of the key features of Kosovo autonomy. In line with the policy of Kosovo authorities to ensure equal education opportunities for all citizens, the period 1974-1989 was characterized by rapid increase of inclusion in primary and secondary education, with instruction organized in three languages: Albanian, Serbian and Turkish. By Law, municipalities were responsible for provision of primary education (grades 1-8), whereas provincial government maintained responsibility for secondary education. Following the practice of the Yugoslav “self-governing” model, responsibilities for curriculum development, quality assurance and even education funding were outsourced to a number of agencies operating at provincial and municipal level. In this setting, schools enjoyed substantial autonomy in organizing provision, managing budget, and appointing staff.

In March 1989, using threats of military force, the Government of Serbia effectively

abolished the autonomy of Kosovo, and subsequently imposed a number of measures implementing centralized rule from Belgrade. An extraordinary feature of the Education System in the period 1990-1999 was the *de facto* existence of two parallel systems, one functioning under the authority of the exiled Government of Kosovo, and the other one under the authority of the Government in Belgrade. Kosovo Albanian students and teachers were deprived of educational opportunities in many ways. Perhaps the most potent symbol of this prejudice was the ethnic shifts introduced in almost all primary schools in Kosovo, often dividing school buildings by brick walls. On the other hand, most Albanian-language secondary schools were not even allowed to operate in public buildings.

Continuous oppression by Belgrade against ethnic Albanians escalated into a bloody war, which was ended in June 1999 by a NATO-led military intervention, and by placing Kosovo under UN administration. One of the first post-war priorities for the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) was to re-establish the education provision by applying legislation applicable in Kosovo prior to the start of NATO military intervention insofar it did not conflict with internationally recognized human rights standards (UNMIK, 1999).

In less than one year, a Joint Interim Administrative Structure (JIAS) effectively discharging the duty of the Kosovo Government was fully functional. The JIAS Administrative Department of Education and Science (DES) was co-headed by one UNMIK appointed co-head and one Kosovo co-head, and was responsible for overall management of the Education System in Kosovo. This was followed by immediate centralization of the Education System. Just for illustration, all teacher contracts for the academic year 2000/01 were co-signed by the international co-heads of DES. Following municipal elections in 2000, responsibilities for school infrastructure and employment of non-teaching staff were devolved to municipalities, whereas other issues including hiring and firing of teachers and school principals remained with central administration.

In 2001 two lines of Education administration were introduced at municipal level – in addition to the Municipal Education Directorates (MED) that came out of local elections, the DES established Education Development Offices (EDOs) to ensure representation at the municipal level. In May 2001 UNMIK promulgated a Constitutional Framework which established Provisional Institutions of Self-Government (PISG) with the Government of Kosovo as its executive authority. Following 2001 national elections UNMIK was gradually transferring increased administrative powers to the PISG, including the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) which took over responsibilities for the Education Sector. The Law on Primary and Secondary Education was promulgated in October 2002 (Law, 2002) paving the way for development of legislation regulating various sub-sectors of the Education System. A major devolution of authority from central to local level took place after declaration of independence of Kosovo when the Kosovo Assembly adopted a package of decentralization laws in line with the Comprehensive proposal for the Kosovo status settlement also known as the Ahtisaari Plan.

The most important sub-sector policy document – the Strategy for Development of Pre-University Education in Kosovo 2007-2017 - was officially adopted before Kosovo declared its independence on February 17, 2008. The new Government of Kosovo that took office in January 2008 recognized the continuity of its education policies with the previous Government in terms of following the strategic directions set in the document. The sector- wide approach to education development has been initiated to better align development partner activities behind a single sector strategic plan in order to develop greater ownership, leadership, and support for building a strong institutional environment. Those efforts led to the development of the Kosovo Education Strategic Plan (KESP) 2011-2016 (MEST, 2010) which represents a broad consensus derived from principles agreed with key stakeholders in the education sector.

Twelve years after the end of conflict in Kosovo, education provision in schools is organized in the Albanian, Serbian, Turkish and Bosnian languages. It should be noted that Serbian schools in Kosovo operate within the Education System of the Republic of Serbia, whereas this article focuses on school operating within the Kosovo Education System.

The structure of schooling

The Education System in Kosovo has undergone significant systemic change in the last decade, operating through a network of 40 pre-schools, 992 elementary schools, 111 secondary schools, three public universities, and around 20 private higher education institutions.

Pre-school institutions

Pre-School Education is organized by specialized pre-school institutions for children aged 0-6, and is characterized by a very low attendance rate compared to other Western Balkans countries, primarily due to limited intake capacity. The total number of children attending specialized public pre-school institutions in Kosovo is 5,154 (~ 3.5% of children aged 0-6) (MEST, 2011). On the other hand, pre-primary level (grade 0) is offered in most elementary schools in Kosovo as a preparatory program for primary level, and is attended by 20,632 (~65%) of children aged 5-6.

Whereas pre-primary education offered in elementary schools is free, and funded from the Kosovo Consolidated Budget, costs of attendance in specialized public pre-primary institutions are shared between parents and municipalities. Also, a number of fee paying private pre-school institutions operate in Kosovo, but there is no functioning licensing system by the state nor is there accurate data on enrolments in such institutions.

Elementary education

Elementary Education comprises 5 years of primary, and 4 years of lower secondary education. Provision is based on the Curriculum Framework and the grade curricula. Curriculum is subject-based and rather prescriptive, but schools can modify up to 15% of the content to accommodate the needs of their students. Primary school classes are taught by one general teacher, whereas lower secondary school classes are taught by subject teachers usually specializing in one or two subject disciplines. Typically, textbooks strictly follow the curriculum structure, and are distributed free to all students.

From the organizational point of view, primary and lower secondary schools can be separate or united in single education institutions. According to official statistics, 301,486 students were attending primary and lower secondary schools in Kosovo in the academic year 2010/11. Personnel consisted of 17,391 teachers, 981 administrators, and 2,691 auxiliary staff.

Secondary education

Upper secondary Education in Kosovo has two major streams: *General Secondary Education* (“Gymnasium”) and *Vocational Education*. There are four general secondary school programs with focus on respective subjects: Mathematics & Informatics, Hard Sciences, Social Sciences, Languages, and one additional general program. Curriculum is based on the Curriculum Framework, and its structure is similar to the one in Lower Secondary level. Duration of schooling is three years for subject-focused programs, and four years for the general program. Education is completed by the state matura exam.

Vocational Schools in Kosovo feature 16 different fields of study, each of them with significant number of profiles training students for certain vocations. The study programs are structured in to two levels:

- Level 1 covers grade 10 and 11 – providing leaving school certificates which serve to enter the labor market. The qualification acquired in this level is titled ‘Semi Skilled Worker.’
- Level 2 covers grade 12 providing the students with qualification ‘Skilled Worker’. Actually, in the VET schools there is grade 13 aiming to enable students with higher level of skills ‘Highly skilled worker. At the end of grade 13 all VET student have to pass the Final Exam in their field of study. It is supposed that they will increase their employment with qualification ‘Highly skilled worker’. In addition, VET students must take the Matura exam if they want to gain diploma for continuing university level studies.

As a rule, general secondary schools and vocational schools are separated, but there are

combined schools in smaller towns offering both general education and vocational streams. During the academic year 2010/11, 106,924 students were attending secondary education, approximately 60% of them in the vocational stream. Personnel consist of 5,294 teachers, 258 administrators and 645 auxiliary staff.

School administration

By Law, municipalities in Kosovo have full and exclusive powers with respect to the provision of public pre-primary, primary and secondary education, whereas the role of the central Government is mainly restricted to policy making, setting the standards and inspecting the schools. Operation of schools is funded from the Special Education Grant allocated to the municipalities on per-capita basis by the Central Government, whereas municipalities may allocate funds for goods and services to schools based on a certain municipality-to-school funding formula. Staff salaries are executed by the Ministry of Public Administration based on input from municipalities, whereas funds for capital outlays are transferred to municipalities by the Ministry of Finance.

The legal framework

The Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo (2008) recognizes the right of every person to free basic education and states:

Public institutions shall ensure equal opportunities to education for everyone in accordance with their specific abilities and needs

Also, the Constitution grants ethnic communities rights to receive education in their mother tongue to the extent prescribed by Law, *“with the thresholds for establishing specific classes or schools for this purpose being lower than normally stipulated for educational institutions”*. According to the Constitution, adaptation, amendment, or repeal of Laws on Education requires majority vote from both: all deputies holding seats on the Kosovo Assembly, and deputies holding seats reserved or guaranteed for representatives of Communities that are not in the majority.

The Pre-University sub-sector is mainly governed by the following laws:

- *Law on Primary and Secondary Education in Kosovo No.2002/2* is one of the first laws approved by the Kosovo Assembly after first national elections in Kosovo. The Law introduced a rather centralized Pre-University Education System in Kosovo and divided responsibilities between central and local authorities. Since provisions are rather general the Law has been accompanied by a number of administrative instructions to operationalize them, often conflicting with the provisions itself. One typical example is replacement of education development offices at municipal level prescribed by Law with those at regional level prescribed by an Administrative

Instruction.

- *Law on Education in the Municipalities of the Republic of Kosovo No.03/L-068* was approved in June 2008 following the entry into force of the Kosovo Constitution. Essentially, this Law devolves certain responsibilities for managing Education System from central to local level, and is part of a larger decentralization package. Also, the Law regulates special rights of the Serbian community to use curricula and textbooks from the Republic of Serbia, and supersedes a number of provisions of the Law on Primary and Secondary Education.
- *Law No. 02/L-42 on Vocational Education and Training* was adopted in April 2006. It regulates the system of formal education and training in Kosovo in line with social and economic developments, including technological changes and labor market and individual needs. This Law sets out the structures of the institutions which deal with this type of education and training. The VET law envisages a combination of school-based education within company training.
- *Law on Pre-school Education No. 02/L-52* promulgated in 2006 establishes a general regulatory framework for this level with particular focus on financing and payments, funding, employment of qualified staff, qualification of specialists, collection of data on children, supervision and discipline of staff, and curriculum adoption and approval
- *Law on Inspection of Education in Kosovo No.2004/37* institutes Inspection mainly focused on legal compliance in Education. Following the promulgation of the Law, seven Regional Inspection Offices were established, replacing former Regional Education Development Offices. Even with the ongoing devolution of responsibilities from central to local level, Education Inspection has remained the responsibility of MEST.
- *Law on Publishing School Textbooks, Educational Teaching Resources, Reading Materials and Pedagogical Documentation No. 02/L-67* institutes the free textbook market, but the responsibility for selection of textbooks still rests with MEST.
- *Law on Final Exam and State Matura Exam No. 03/L-018* introduces compulsory state Matura for general secondary schools and students of vocational schools who want to continue their university studies. Also, the law and subsequent bylaws regulate the use of matura scores for admission to the higher education.
- Law No 03/L-060 on the National Qualifications was adopted by the

Assembly in November 2008. The purpose of the law is to establish a national qualifications system, based on a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) regulated by a National Qualifications Authority (NQA).

Most of the bylaws (administrative instructions) adopted by the MEST relate to the Pre-University Sub-Sector. On the other hand there are a number of laws as well as provisions from other education sub-sectors that affect the Pre-University Education.

Kosovo is experiencing major legislative reform. The new Law on Pre-University Education which effectively replaces the 2002 Law of Primary and Secondary Education entered into force on 1 October 2011. In a nutshell, the new Law defines the following duties for the Ministry:

- to develop policies, draft, and implement legislation;
- to define the outcomes of the different levels of pre-university education and training and to award, or authorize the award of, qualifications at appropriate levels of the National Qualifications Framework to those who successfully complete pre-university programs;
- to promote a non-discriminatory education system;
- to promote the protection of vulnerable groups within the education and training system, the health and welfare of pupils and employees of educational and/or training institutions, and measures to prevent drop-outs;
- to establish criteria and manage a comprehensive system of licensing and certification of all teachers;
- to establish and maintain an education and training management information system;
- to provide annually to the Grants Commission sufficient data and formula standards in order to determine the specific grant for education;
- to design effective and impartial forms of education administration and management of education and training institutions for implementation by municipalities and to establish criteria and procedures for monitoring the performance of governing boards;
- to promote and improve the quality and efficiency of education and training

through legal mechanisms

- to set the criteria for the evaluation and assessment of pupils in educational and/or training institutions;
- to organize and manage external assessment in levels 1, 2 and 3, in line with the requirements for the award of qualifications;
- to ensure comprehensive policies for inclusion of persons with special needs;
- to promote parental and community partnership and participation in educational and training activities.

In addition, the Government of Kosovo, through MEST and government agencies, retains responsibility for developing the Kosovo Curriculum Framework, setting standards related to its implementation, teaching personnel and school space, responsibility for inspection, etc.

Freedom to establish non-state schools

The legal base for private education in Kosovo was set by the 2002 Law on Primary and Secondary Education, and was further elaborated in related bylaws issued by MEST. The new 2011 Law on Pre-University Education also recognizes public-private partnership as a form of founding non-state schools.

In general, private educational institutions may be founded by any legal person registered in Kosovo, or by a citizen or group of citizens of Kosovo, except those who were “convicted of an offence of violence, or an offence of indecency involving children”. Private educational institutions are required to obtain license from the MEST. The new Law states:

- *The government licensing standard shall take account of the variety of teaching and learning methods employed by private institutions and the avoidance of risk to children and staff including provisions related to:*
- *adequacy of buildings and equipment, which must comply with international standards on health and safety and accessible design for persons with disabilities, including teaching rooms, cabinets, workshops and laboratories, fields or sports halls;*
- *library and computer rooms;*
- *number and qualifications of teaching staff;*

- *the Kosovo Curriculum Framework or a foreign curriculum recognized by the Ministry...*

A similar provision from the 2002 Law was operationalized in form of an administrative instruction issued in 2003 which is still in effect, and essentially defines the licensing requirements and procedure. Following the inspection and review of application, MEST issues licenses for the period from one to five years. From the perspective of education legislation, private institutions in Kosovo are not required to identify themselves as for-profit or not-for-profit. However, schools operating as non-governmental organizations with public benefit status are exempted from paying the profit tax, provided that they offer their services to disadvantaged and/or vulnerable groups below market price. In reality, there are no such schools, but, in case of not-for-profit schools, there is a practice of waiving the requirement to submit bank guarantees aimed at protecting the financial interests of persons needing to complete their education at another institution in the event of closure. On the other hand, the Law on Value Added Tax (VAT Law, 2009) prescribes that education services are exempted from the VAT provided that they are supplied by licensed institutions at comparable prices. A bylaw issued by the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF, 2010) states that a comparable price cannot exceed 30% of the education cost as calculated by responsible institutions. So far, this provision has not been implemented, and supply of education services is subject to the VAT.

Homeschooling

Despite legal provisions that recognize the option of home schooling, there are no arrangements for its implementation in Kosovo. By Law, “if the municipality estimates that a child of compulsory school age in their area is not receiving suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise, and is not the subject of permanent expulsion under the Law, it shall serve a notice in writing on the parents requiring the parents to satisfy the municipality within the period specified in the notice that the child is receiving such education whether at home or otherwise”. And further “If the parents respond that the child is being educated outside the formal education and training system, either publicly- funded or private, the arrangements made by the parents, and the inspection arrangements, shall be subject to the approval of the Ministry, having consulted the relevant municipality.” (Pre-University Law, 2011).

School choice not limited by family income

By Law Compulsory Education in Kosovo public schools is free of charge, but this provision is also effectively applied for pre-primary (grade 0) and upper secondary level (grades 10-12/13) as well. On the other hand, municipalities apply fees for attendance in specialized public pre-school institutions, which also receive subsidies from municipalities.

Each primary and lower secondary school has a catchment area defined by the municipality, and has to admit all children of compulsory school age living within the designated area. The only exception is when parents decide that the child will attend school in an official language which is not represented in the respective school, in which case the municipality needs to offer alternatives.

By Law, upper secondary schools “shall have catchment areas defined by agreement between municipalities (or where agreement cannot be reached, by the Ministry), according to the type of education or training concerned; and provision shall be made for voluntary transfer between different types of school at this level according to the interests and abilities of the pupil”.

The parents of a pupil living outside the catchment area for a particular school may apply to the relevant municipality to enroll the pupil at that school; by Law such places shall be allocated in a fair manner at the discretion of the municipality on the basis of transparent, published criteria.

Currently, private education institutions of any level do not receive state subsidies, and apply tuition fees typically ranging from 800-3,500 EUR/year which limit access of the majority of Kosovo children to those institutions, although most of the institutions offer partial or full scholarships to excellent students.

School distinctiveness protected by law and policy

Distinctive character

In general, public schools in Kosovo are governed by the municipalities, and follow the state curriculum. As indicated above, public schools are allowed to modify up to 15% of the curriculum content to accommodate the needs of students, whereas qualifications are determined by curriculum itself. Also, the choice of textbooks is limited to those officially approved by MEST. On the other hand, private schools are allowed to develop their own curricula and use their own textbooks, which are approved by MEST in course of the accreditation process.

Special arrangements are in place for Education in Serbian language (Law on Education in Municipalities, 2008). In principle, schools that teach in the Serbian language may apply curricula or textbooks developed by the Ministry of Education of Serbia upon notification to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology of Kosovo, provided that MEST raises no objection within three months. In the event of an objection, the matter is referred to an independent commission composed of three MEST representatives, three representatives of Serbian Community, and one international member representing the International Civilian Office, mandated to oversee and support implementation of the Ahtisaari Plan. In practice, Serbian language schools in Kosovo use curricula and textbooks developed in Serbia, but do not notify MEST nor accept any arbitration on disputes.

Decisions about admitting pupils

As stated above, each primary and lower secondary school in Kosovo is required to admit all children of compulsory age living within its catchment area. The school director decides about the enrolment of children under the minimum compulsory school age based on recommendation by the school professional- psychological service. Municipality decides on enrolment of children living outside school's catchment area based on application from parents.

Children with special needs of compulsory school age should also be assigned to the closest school, whereas enrolments in special schools are justified only when after expert assessment it is considered impractical to enroll a child in a regular municipal school. Kosovo has 346,000 students, slightly more than 1,000 of whom have been officially identified and studying in special classes in regular schools, called attached classes, or in special schools. A credible UNICEF report concludes that less than 10% of children with special needs have been identified and given meaningful intervention (Landsman M, 2009), and describes the process as follows:

The de facto policy in the field is children are identified by their parents or the schools as having special needs. According to our interviews with directors of the regular schools and special schools, the norm is that the school forms an opinion of whether or not the child should be in the school and negotiates with the parents concerning the proper framework for the child. When either side is not satisfied, a medical specialist (now, increasingly, a psychologist) is consulted. If, according to this process, a child is determined to need special education, and there is an attached class in the school, the child is placed in that class. If not, the child is referred to a special school. If there is no attached class and the special school is too distant, the child usually stays at home.

MEST determines intake capacity of each public upper secondary school, sets admission criteria based on success from previous schooling and leaving exam from compulsory education, and invites applications for enrolment of students, usually in the beginning of July. Students apply directly with schools concerned and admission decisions are reached by schools themselves based on the criteria and procedures determined by MEST. For students who were not successful in the first application round, a second call for applications is published, usually in August.

Private education institutions are allowed to apply their own admission procedures and criteria, whereas their conformity with the Law is determined through the school licensing process.

Decisions about staff

The 2008 legislation gives the right to municipalities to employ teachers and other

school personnel in accordance with legal procedures for the recruitment, selection and employment of public employees (Law on Education in Municipalities, 2008). On the other hand, the MEST is responsible for licensing of teachers and school directors. The system is not yet in place, but the idea is that MEST maintains a central database of licensed teachers, whereas responsibility for their employment rests with municipalities. The specific qualifications are accepted in the licensing system and teachers are to be considered qualified for the respective position, as long as they teach the subject/s they are trained for (MEST, 2010):

Teachers are considered qualified only if teaching the subject the degree is issued for and the level specified. Degrees issued under a different system or structure, including degrees issued abroad, will be categorized according to the categorization above.

In any case, the Ministry may instruct the municipality to terminate the employment of a teacher appointed contrary to the criteria established in the Law, or who is barred from work due to a medical condition or the order of a court, or who is otherwise disqualified according to the provisions of the applicable law. Also, municipalities carry out selection of school directors and deputy directors in accordance with legal procedures and criteria determined by MEST (MEST, 2009). A committee consisting of two members delegated by the Municipality and one member delegated by the Ministry is responsible to establish ranking of candidates and submit the appointment proposal to the mayor.

Accountability for school quality

In the education sector in Kosovo, devolution of responsibilities means that standards, curriculum, and assessment are decided at the central level, and that local governments have to abide by the central regulations while fulfilling their responsibilities within the education sectors. Mechanisms that link the central level quality control system that incorporate standards for everything from curriculum and teaching to local-level certification of teaching, national exams, and student diplomas are essential for ensuring an operable quality assurance system. However, there are serious difficulties in making such systems work.

MEST is responsible for developing the Kosovo Curriculum Framework (KCF) which is “Competency-Based”, and, as such, arranged around the concept of providing children with the required skills, attitudes and knowledge to perform the tasks that society and educationalists consider that they will need for their time at school and for the rest of their lives as students, employees, family members and as part of the society of Kosovo. The KCF was officially adopted in August 2011.

By Law, MEST, through the Kosovo Curriculum, Standards and Assessment Agency

(KCSAA), should develop subject syllabuses through a regular process of discussion with representatives of teachers and municipalities, community representative organizations, and with national and international experts; including recommendations on:

- the content of the core curriculum including central methodology and subject syllabus, objectives, learning outcomes for each subject associated with the main stages of the curriculum, and key competences to be achieved at the end of ISCED Level 3;
- evaluation and standardized assessment of pupils' achievements at defined intervals, and the criteria for progression of pupils, compatible with the requirements of the National Qualifications Framework for assessment leading to the award of qualifications;
- list of recommended textbooks, educational teaching resources and learning materials, including suitable materials for use by pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities

At present there are no structures either on central, municipal or school level that would ensure the quality of implementation of present or future curriculum in schools. The Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2011-2016 (KESP, 2011) anticipates, inter alia, the following measures to establish quality assurance mechanisms within the Kosovo Education System:

- Divide the Inspection function in two sections (administration and professional) to better perform the tasks coming from legislative changes.
- Build capacities for internal and external evaluation of school performance aiming at improved quality of educational provision in schools.
- Establish municipal advisory and guidance services (offering professionals of various profiles) and build their capacity.
- Provide professional guidance and advisory services at the level of schools.
- It seems that the quality of education outcomes will remain one of the key challenges for Kosovo. Although it depends on numerous factors, teachers appear to be the most important one. Teacher licensing is seen as means to create pre-conditions for good teaching in schools.

The first regulation on teacher licensing in Kosovo was introduced in April 2004 (MEST, 2004), but was never applied in practice. The second unsuccessful attempt was made in August 2007 with a new Administrative Instruction which replaced the

previous one. In September 2008, another regulation was approved and applied for the purpose of initial teacher licensing (MEST, 2008). Based on their pre-service qualifications, all unqualified and beginner teachers (with less than one year of education experience) in Kosovo were granted temporary licenses valid for 2 years, whereas qualified teachers were granted a 5-year license of career teacher in one of the following four categories:

- Normal School graduates
- Higher Pedagogical School (HPS) graduates (2 year programs)
- Bachelor program graduates (3 or 4 years)
- Master and PhD program graduates

Initial licensing had immediate effect on teacher salaries which increased by 10 to 35%. Administrative Instruction 16/2008 anticipated three other levels in the career ladder: Advanced Teacher, Mentor Teacher and Meritorious Teacher, but the criteria for advancing from one level to another were to be defined later. Following the review of existing regulations, a new bylaw was issued which replaced the previous one and introduced requirements for career advancement, which depends two factors: 1) credits accumulated from accredited in-service courses and 2) teacher performance appraisal.

In April 2010 MEST issued regulation on accreditation of in-service teacher training programs which also sets simple procedures for the recognition of training programs offered before it came into force, thus allowing teachers to use their in-service credits for the purpose of career advancement.

Procedures for teacher performance appraisal are still to be developed, but the four steps in performance scale have already been decided by State Council for Teacher Licensing (SCTL). They are:

- Exemplary performance – Teacher consistently exceeds expectations
- Good performance – Teacher consistently meets expectations
- Satisfactory performance – Teacher does not always meets expectations
- Unsatisfactory performance – Teacher does not meet expectations

Teaching of values

After decades characterized by memorization and rote learning in schools, a white paper titled “The New Kosovo Curriculum Framework” (UNMIK DoES, 2001) recognizes that “learning experiences should not only focus on information, but also provide, in a balanced way, knowledge, skills, values and attitudes”. Although never officially approved in its final version, the document served as reference on what knowledge, skills, values and attitudes should be incorporated into school programs and how this should be done.

The document identifies values that should be taught by learning areas, although it does not pay much attention to how they should be taught in schools. Below are few examples:

Primary School (grades 1-5)

Students should be taught the basic history of Kosovo, and of different communities that live in Kosovo. An interest in exploring historical events should be encouraged. This should be from the perspective of dealing constructively with the past and praising the people and historical personalities who contributed to the spiritual and material development of the society and its well-being. As well, values such as human dignity, independence and peaceful cooperation with others should be defended and cultivated.

Students should be supported in developing basic life skills and learning about society and active democratic citizenship. They should develop understanding, respect for human rights, and tolerance of diversity. Students should be confronted already at this age with gender issues, as well as with other issues involving differences between people, and should develop capacities to value these differences positively.

Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights

The citizen of a democratic society needs to develop the competencies of participation in public life. These include: voting; taking specific actions with the view of influencing political decisions, such as taking an active role in a political party; expressing one’s personal opinion, e.g. via mass media; and participating in an argumentative dialogue with others. Students should be helped to understand that democracy does not emerge and develop automatically, but that it depends on the specific contribution of everybody.

Environmental Education

Students have to be helped to understand that the environment represents a value in itself, and that it has to be protected and preserved not only because it serves human beings for survival and development. Students have to be supported to discover the links between a natural environment and a manmade environment

and the importance of a natural and ‘artificial’ environment for health, quality of life and sustainable development.

The Kosovo Curriculum Framework (KCF) approved in August 2011 goes one step further. It embraces a competency-based perspective in order to address the diverse learner needs. The system of competencies includes: knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, emotions and routines. The following are key competencies envisaged for the Kosovo Education System:

- Communication and expression competencies – Effective communicator
- Thinking competencies – Creative thinker
- Learning competencies – Successful learner
- Life-, work-, and environment-related competencies – Productive contributor
- Personal competencies – Healthy individual
- Civic competencies – Responsible citizen

In the last decade, the Kosovo Curriculum promotes learner’s centered instruction with teachers being able to use a range of methodologies suitable to stimulate learning among students.

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